

REMARKS

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication Nos. 63-68406 and 6-344727. Claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice, thereby rendering these rejections moot.

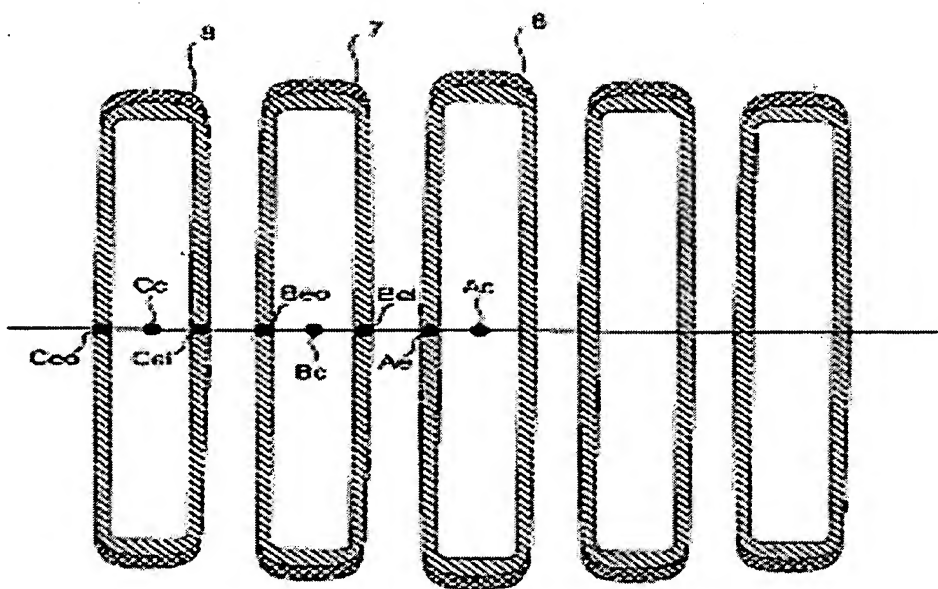
Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and/or §103 as being unpatentable over WO 2003/059654 to Maruoka et al. (which is equivalent to United States Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0000613). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

In general, a pneumatic tire, when mounted on a regular rim in accordance with standards, having regular internal pressure, with 100% load applied thereto, will have ground-contact pressure at the edge of a rib that tends to become higher than the ground-contact pressure at the center of the rib. Such ground-contact pressure configuration causes uneven wear, such as shoulder wear and railway wear. The present invention relates to a method to suppress uneven wear by making the ground-contact pressure at the edge of a rib equal to or lower than the ground-contact pressure at the center of the rib. Specifically, the present invention discloses that it is possible to suppress uneven wear by making the ground-contact pressure at both edges of the outer grooves lower than the ground-contact pressure at the center of the rib. The cited references, including Maruoka et al., fail to disclose the relationship between ground-contact pressure of the center of the rib and pressure of the edges of the rib, as described in more detail below.

Applicant respectfully submits that the Maruoka et al. reference fails to disclose or suggest all of the features of the present invention. More specifically, the Maruoka et al. reference fails to disclose or suggest a pneumatic tire with the specific ranges of the ratios of ground contact pressures defined in independent Claim 1.

Each of the ground contact pressure ratios defined in Claim 1 includes a “middle” ground-contact pressure, such as shown in Applicant’s Figure 3 (reproduced below), which includes center-rib-middle ground-contact pressure indicated by A_c , second-rib-middle ground-contact pressure indicated by B_c , and shoulder-rib-middle ground-contact pressure indicated by C_c .

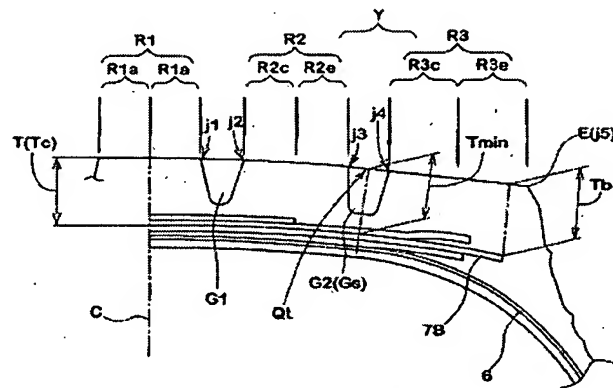
FIG.3



In contrast, the Maruoka et al. reference fails to disclose or suggest the ground contact pressures at any of these

“middle” areas. As can be seen from a review of Figure 2 of Maruoka et al. (reproduced to the right) there are no contact pressure values indicated between, for

FIG.2



example, R2c and R2e, or between R3c and R3e. Accordingly, the Maruoka et al. reference does not disclose or suggest the invention of Claim 1 in which specific ratios, which include the “middle” ground contact pressures, are recited.

Claims 2 and 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Maruoka et al. in view of JP ‘727. Claim 2 has been cancelled, without prejudice, thereby rendering this rejection moot with respect to this claim. However, with respect to claim 3, Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of the present invention. With regard to the §103 rejection of Claim 3, the Maruoka et al. reference fails to disclose or suggest a pneumatic tire with the specific ranges of the ratios of ground contact pressures defined in independent Claim 3, as discussed above in the remarks directed to the §102(b) rejection of Claim 1, which also includes the same ratios. JP ‘727 does not remedy this deficiency, nor was it relied upon as

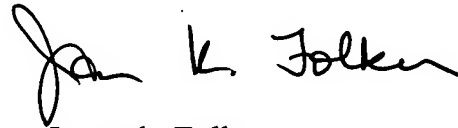
such. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of Claim 3.

Applicant has also added new Claims 4-9. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 4-13 are allowable over the cited references.

For all of the above reasons, Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would aid in the prosecution of the application, or that outstanding issues exist, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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